

Never a Truer Word

Do you remember the first words you recognised when you began to read? The three and four-year-olds that I teach are so pleased with themselves when they begin to realise that they can spell the word B-I-B-L-E.

We work on this skill for quite some time. Each week we sing the [B-I-B-L-E song](#). I display the letters, and we point to each one as we sing it. When I pick up my bible, I point out the letters and say them.

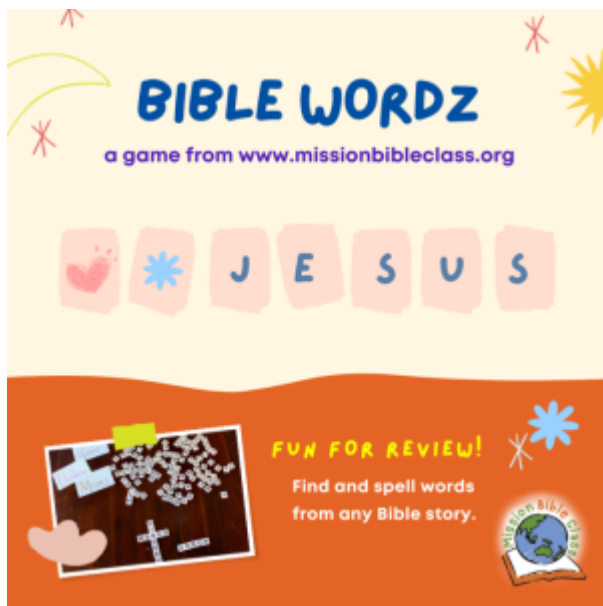
For a while, the children just mimic me. I can tell that they have not quite figured it out. Then, one day, it “clicks”. That’s what happened this past Sunday. For the first time, one of the children realised that those letters spell BIBLE!

We sang the song as usual, and he pointed to the letters. But, this time, he then looked at me and said, “That says BIBLE!”. He then looked all over our classroom, pointing out the word everywhere he saw it. It was on each bible in the room. It was on a room poster. The word BIBLE was outlined on the bulletin board. He was so excited!

Recognising words as we read our Bible is another way of learning. Pointing out and talking about words like “Jesus” and “forgive” can be life-changing.

I’m always looking for games that help children learn and are adaptable to any lesson. The [Bible Wordz game](#) is one of those.

In this adaptable game, children form words from letter tiles. The words relate to words found in the Bible lesson. Thanks to Tamako Weiss for putting this game together for me.



Supplies:

1. Individual letter tiles: Use tiles from games like Scrabble or Bananagrams. Magnetic letters are another good choice. Alternatively, make your own from paper or bottlecaps. You will need enough tiles to form multiple words
2. Index cards or paper to create word cards
3. A flat surface, like a table, on which to play
4. (optional) 30-second timer
5. (optional) Prizes. These can be stickers, candy bars, bookmarks, or inexpensive toys

Preparations:

1. Collect or prepare letter tiles.
2. Create the word cards by writing a keyword on each card.

How to play:

1. After telling the bible story, show students the keyword cards. Take time to explain the meaning of each word.
2. To begin the game, the students spread the tiles (face up) on the table surface.
3. Set the timer for 30 seconds. When the time begins, students try to spell as many keywords as possible before the time is up.
4. Students can use word grids or make the words individually.
5. This can be done as a group or as a competition. If competing, whoever spells the most words in 30 seconds wins.

Ways you can adapt this game:

1. Ask the children to use a bible and choose the keywords on their own. They can then create their own word cards and play the game.
2. Use very simple words for younger children and more complex ones for older children.
3. Use review questions instead of word cards. Plan ahead so that you can ask questions that have one-word answers. Ask the review question, and the students spell out the answer using the letter tiles.
The following example is from the story [Moses Does Not Honour God](#).
Question: Who struck the rock twice? Answer: Moses.
The first child to guess and spell M-O-S-E-S wins the round.
4. Skip the cards and timer and play straight from the Bible. Choose a set of verses and form as many words as possible from those verses.
5. There are many ways you can adapt this game. Choose what is best for your class and students.

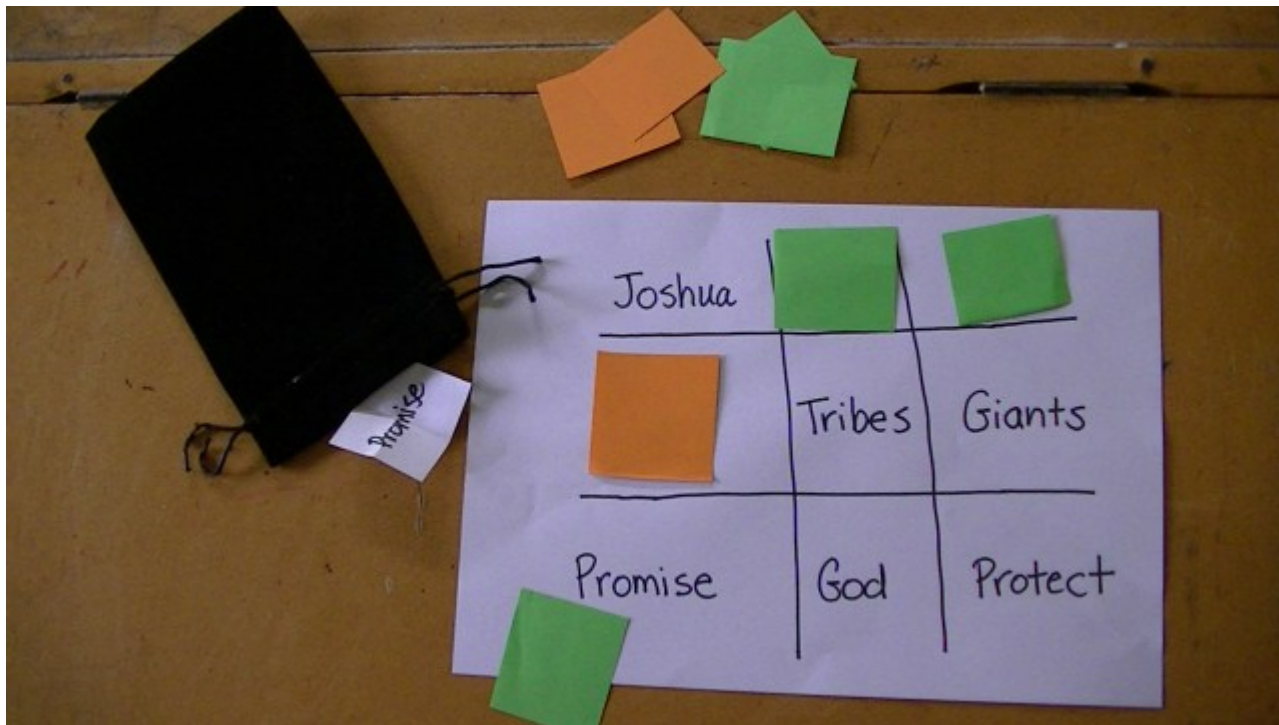
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Same Game – Different Name

I thought I'd finish off 2014 by posting a simple game to use as a review in Bible Class.

Well, at least I assumed it would be simple!



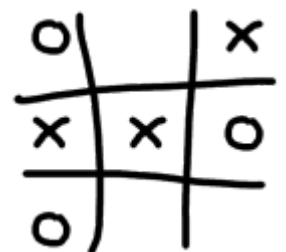
A woman named Debbie (Arizona, USA) emailed me awhile back with the suggestion of adapting an “X and O” game into a review activity for Bible Class. Children list words and ideas and then play a game similar to “tic-tac-toe” or “noughts and crosses”. The example in the picture above is from the Bible lesson [Conquering the Land and Fighting Giants](#).

I thought such a simple idea would be easy to explain until I began filming a “how-to” video and writing out instructions. Hopefully, the final result makes sense. [Click here to learn how to use the game in your Bible Class](#).

Same Game-Different Name

It turns out that many of us play the game but we know it by different names. That’s why I stuck with the simple title of “[X and O Review Game](#)”. Here are some of the other names listed by [Wikipedia](#):

- Tick-tack-toe, Tic-tac-toe, Tick-tat-toe, or Tit-tat-toe (USA, Canada)
- Noughts and crosses or Naughts and crosses (United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa)
- Exy-Ozys, Xsie-Osies (verbal name only) (Northern Ireland)
- Xs and Os (Egypt, Republic of Ireland, Canada, Zimbabwe, Romania)
- O-X (Mauritius)



Older Than You Think

I was amazed to find out that In fact, 1st Century Romans played a version of this game that was very similar to what we play today! So this game has been played since the time of Christ.

Same Same but Different

As my Thai friends say, “same-same but different”. God’s Word does not change but it is shared in different languages and by various methods that fit the culture and understanding of the hearer. You know the needs of the children you are teaching. I’m hoping you are reading the ideas on www.missionbibleclass.org and then adapting them to your own teaching situation and language.

If a simple and inconsequential game of “X and O” can still be played and enjoyed by adults and children century after century then how much more lasting is the Word of God for all people for all time?

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